

# How to Have a Healthier Holiday Season

## General Tips for the Healthiest Holidays:

- **Don't skip breakfast.** Even though it can be tempting to “save your appetite for later,” skipping breakfast can lead us to overindulge and leave the table feeling over-full and bloated. Prioritize eating *something* before heavy meals.
- **Stick to a schedule.** Routine is key when it comes to surviving all the holiday gettogethers. Deliberately schedule meals and snacks into your day. This also helps keep blood sugar in check and optimize digestion.
- **Limit the alcohol.** We realize this might be easier said than done, but focusing on hydration with water is key. If you choose to drink, alternate alcohol and water. You can also make spritzers by adding seltzer to your usual drink to make it last longer.
- **Keep water in your hand.** Especially at social events, it can be hard to mingle and not be drinking. Keeping water in your hand can help mitigate the peer pressure.
- **Focus on fiber.** Digestion can be off when you're eating high sugar and/or high fat foods during the holidays. Fiber not only helps you stay full but can help regulate digestion when you're out of your normal routine.
- **Eat the rainbow.** No, we don't mean Skittles. Each color represents a different phytonutrient that has unique benefits. Aim to get several colors into your day.
- **Incorporate immunity-supportive foods.** Antioxidants are not only helpful against inflammation but in preventing sickness throughout the winter months.
- **Move your body - outside.** Getting “green exercise” can help boost your mood during the winter months. The fresh air can interrupt all the food-centric social events and help mitigate stress during the holidays. Stress can cause impact both appetite and digestion.



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## Building a Balanced Plate

*whether at home or at a social event*



Aim for your plate to be approximately

- **1/4 to 1/3 protein**  
(meat, fish, beans, eggs, tofu)
- **1/4 to 1/3 carb**  
(bread, rice, pasta, potato, corn, peas)
- **1/3 to 1/2 fruits and veggies**

### Focus on

- **High fiber** (baked potato w/ skin vs. mashed potatoes)
- **Lean proteins** (mostly white meat, with some dark meat as desired)
- **Low added sugar** (homemade cranberry relish vs. cranberry sauce)

## Tips and Tricks for Traditional Dishes

1. **Bake or roast** your turkey instead of frying.
2. Keep the **skin on half of the potatoes** for mashed potatoes to boost fiber content.
3. **Use Greek yogurt** in place of some of the sour cream in recipes.
4. **Reduce the sugar** in sweet potato casserole by 10 to 25%.
5. Swap out green bean casserole for **roasted green beans with almonds**.
6. **Use whole wheat bread** instead of white when making stuffing/dressing.
7. **Load up on spices** to replace some of the added salt in recipes.

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## Mindful Eating Tips

Sometimes we eat out of habit or obligation and not necessarily hunger. Mindful eating is a strategy you can use to slow down. Even better? You can use this activity with your family!



Trying this mindful eating exercise:

1. Before you start eating, first describe what your **food looks like** - color, shape, texture
2. Then, describe what it **smells like**.
3. After that, place a bite between your lips but don't eat it just yet - describe the **texture** of that bite
4. Now it's time to eat it. Chew at least 10-20 times and describe the **taste**.
5. Finally, think of what the **sound** is while you're chewing it.

## Understanding Hunger and Fullness

This is another family-friendly tool you can use to help decipher hunger versus habit. Use this before a meal or between first and second/subsequent plates.

